

Careers in Municipalities

CAREERS IN MUNICIPALITIES

A Guide to Local Government Jobs in Ontario

BUSSERMP



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About this Book

‘Careers in Municipalities’ is aimed at introducing Ontario students to employment options in local governments around the province. It aims to combine civics and career education by presenting a straightforward, concise overview of how municipalities work, who the key players are, and how the parts of a municipality can be understood from the point of view of the people who work in them.

About the Author

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Collaboration and Support

Crucial research and collaboration on the groundwork for this book was contributed by Isabela Sipos, in a research assistant position generously funded by the Open Educational Resources (OER) Grant administered by the team at the MacPherson at McMaster University. Cindy Schooley from the Faculty of Social Sciences at McMaster also contributed to the design and approach across years of partnership, co-design, and workshopping. Thanks and appreciation are also due to Nina Cammalleri and McMaster’s Alumni team, to Jennifer Clarke from the Arts & Science team, and to multiple alumni, students, and community partners who have helped to shape this project by sharing their insights, experiences, workflows, and institutional understanding.

Ongoing Revision

This edition is intended for ongoing revision, improvement, and correction. Please feel free to contact the author with any suggestions for additions, fixes, or updating. Everything that’s well done in the book is thanks to the contributors and collaborators, and everything that’s amiss is the sole responsibility of the author.

1.

INTRODUCTION: MUNICIPALITIES IN ONTARIO

Understanding Municipal Structures

This book is aimed at highlighting the many different career paths available in municipalities so you can, perhaps, consider new job options you had not considered before. Municipalities are complex organizations and despite some basic similarities they are not all similar in size, makeup, or operations. This can make it confusing to studying municipal career options confusing. Explaining municipal jobs properly, though, turns out to require explaining how municipalities work. This introductory chapter provides a broad overview of municipalities in the particular context of Ontario.

Why Use the Word 'Municipalities'?

The word municipalities is the right word to use when examining job options in local government because it is a word that accurately covers all of the relevant types of organization. Some students, especially those from big cities, might ask: wouldn't it be simpler just to use the word 'cities' to describe local governments? The answer is 'no'. Cities are indeed an important type of municipality, but while many Canadians live in large urban areas, many do not. Many live in towns, in villages, or in rural areas. The local government body that provides people with safety and services can be quite different in shape, size, and makeup from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Yet to the extent that these units share essential and important things in common, both in practice and under the law, we need a word that applies to all of them. That word is 'municipalities'.

Municipalities and Provinces

Most Canadian students understand the basic differences between the municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government. What is often not well understood is the relationship between municipalities and the provinces. Section 92(8) of Canada's *Constitution Act* grants provinces the power to make laws related to municipal institutions. Each province of Canada has one or more key law governing how municipalities ought to be structured, administered, and run.

Select Examples of Laws Covering Municipalities

Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, for example, call theirs the *Municipal Government Act*. Manitoba has *The Municipal Act*, but also has a special piece of legislation for the City of Winnipeg called *The City of Winnipeg Charter*. Similarly, Ontario municipalities in general are governed by the *Municipal Act (2001)* while a specific *City of Toronto Act (2006)* covers that specific local government.

Ontario Municipalities and 'Tiers'

Ontario's size, landscape, and human geography make it difficult to design just one kind of structure that would suit every local community equally. Sometimes very densely populated urban areas need to be governed differently than nearby rural areas. Other times both an urban area and its nearby rural communities might wish to pool resources

Ontario's *Municipal Act* uses a 'tier' system to categorize various municipalities. The province's current 444 municipalities are sorted into the following categories (with the number of each indicated in brackets):

- Upper-Tier Municipalities (30): These are 'regions' that provide various services or 'counties' that provide relatively more limited services. Typically these geographically larger upper-tier municipalities will contain one or more smaller, denser lower-tier municipalities, as described below.
- Lower-Tier Municipalities (241): These municipalities that are nested inside of service-providing regions or counties — but are not excluded from their services. Residents of the lower-tier municipality benefit from the services provide by both levels or 'layers'.
- Separated Lower (Single) Tier Municipalities (19): These are municipalities that are geographically 'within' larger service-providing counties, but which are not considered to be a part of them for municipal purposes or service delivery. On a visual map, these separated municipalities look like they are 'surrounded by' an upper-tier municipality, but they function as something of an island of exception.
- Single-Tier Municipalities (154): These are municipalities that are neither in nor 'within' a larger service-providing region or county. They typically cover all of the services that would be offered elsewhere by both 'tiers' combined. Single-tier municipalities typically border the closest region or county, rather than being geographically 'surrounded' by one.

This tier structure is useful for understanding why jobs, reporting structures, and working relationships might differ from locality to locality within Ontario. A police force, for example, might be operated by a city in one part of the province, while a similar police force will be run at the regional level elsewhere.

Select Examples of Tiers

Looking at some example cases can help to appreciate how the tier structure works in practice. Examples of

upper tier municipalities include Peel Region, York Region, and counties such as the County of Essex or County of Lanark.

Lower-tier municipalities within Peel Region include the City of Mississauga and the City of Brampton. Similarly, the City of Vaughan and the Town of Newmarket are two of the lower-tier municipalities within York Region.

Separated lower (single) tier municipalities are found across Ontario and include:

- City of London, separated from Middlesex County
- City of Windsor, separated from Essex County
- City of Kingston, separated from Frontenac County
- City of Barrie, separated from Simcoe County

As outlined above, single-tier municipalities are not found in or within a region or county, and have territory all their own. Examples of single-tier municipalities include the City of Hamilton, City of Toronto, City Ottawa. All cities in Northern Ontario are also single-tier municipalities because Northern Ontario does not have the regional or county structure found in other areas of the province.

The Goals of This Book

This book is aimed at illuminating career options in municipalities for students pursuing, or considering, higher education. It is aimed primarily at students inclined towards the liberal arts, social sciences, and humanities. While the book is aimed at those audiences, it may also interest students pursuing education in business, human resources, marketing, or related fields. What students in all these fields share is a people-centered and institution-centered set of adaptable skills that are transferrable across contexts and between portfolios. The selection of career options profiled in this book are curated for broad accessibility, with many vocational or professional roles strictly requiring particular educational training either de-emphasized or excluded for reasons of scope. However, students currently gearing their education towards science, technology, engineering, and math fields may of course find the book helpful, especially given that municipalities certainly do employ – and rely upon – specialists with those educational background. Students in these fields and in more specialized professions may find that while relevant niche roles are not profiled in this book, they do certainly exist in municipalities' organizational structures.

The Layout of the Book

The careers explored in this book are sorted according to the pre-existing structure of Canada's national occupation classification (NOC), developed and maintained by Economic and Social Development Canada. This is the system used by Statistics Canada, and by other entities across the country, to sort and categorize

people's jobs. The NOC is used in the Canadian census, and it's also used in labour market reporting and in skills development resources.

Each NOC category is distinguished, at the most granular level, by a category title and by a five-digit numerical code. To a knowing observer, the numbers in a category's code can indicate how it fits into the wider classification structure, including which level of education is most typically needed. Each category typically covers multiple different job types or job titles, which are sometimes closely related variants and other times are quite different in structure, context, and function despite the categorical similarities.

Each of the chapters in this book covers a select subset of these codes, and some of their most relevant job titles. Each chapter covers the relevant categories and roles particular to particular facets of municipal organization, organized by reporting structure. In other words, the chapters are differentiated by who the supervisors, managers, and leaders are and how they themselves are situated in the overall municipal structure. Chapter 1 covers various elected officials and senior leaders themselves. Chapter 2 focuses on people who work directly for elected officials, serving as political staffers. Chapter 3 examines the bulk of municipal employees who report, in fairly straightforward ways, into the traditional bureaucratic structure of a municipality. Chapter 4 covers roles that report to somewhat independent or para-public entities, namely those that are governed by local boards with some relationship to municipal leadership and council.

This way of sorting out municipal career roles is aimed primarily at helping the next generation of job seekers to understand the job postings to which they might apply. Yet hopefully this way of organizing the chapters also has the added benefit of clarifying how municipalities work, and how they are organized, for the reader as citizen as well as potential worker. To the extent that this strategy succeeds and is helpful to its intended audiences, it can help to demonstrate that the goals career education and civics education are, and perhaps should be, intertwined.

Resources on Municipalities in Canada and Ontario

Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). *Municipalities 101*. <https://www.amo.on.ca/about-us/municipal-101>

Canada. 'Section 92', Constitution Acts of 1867 to 1982. Justice Laws Website. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/section-92.html>

Ontario. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-municipal-affairs-housing>

2.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Elected officials are the key leaders and ultimate decision-makers in any municipality. The various roles relevant to municipal and local government include:

- Municipal councillors;
- Head of council (e.g. the mayor);
- School board trustees;
- Federal and provincial elected officials, in their local capacity.

There is only one occupational category relevant to these types of roles.

Legislators – 00010

Some of the key roles in municipalities are elected officials who are elected to their roles rather than being hired or appointed. Canada’s national occupation classification (NOC) classifies these leaders under the category of ‘legislators’: “Legislators participate in the activities of a federal, provincial, territorial or local government legislative body or executive council, band council or school board as elected or appointed members (2021).”

As a ‘career path’, becoming a legislator in an Ontario municipality is unlike most other ‘career’ paths because people with any career background or even no career background are technically eligible, and ultimately only need to persuade voters of their readiness for the role (though in practice they may need to convince other gatekeepers like media organizations and campaign donors). The typical employment requirements for legislators, as suggested on the national occupation classification, simply state: “Election to a legislative body, or appointment to positions such as senator, lieutenant-governor or governor general, is required (NOC 2021).”

Elected roles are also typically short-term positions, with many elected officials serving only one multi-year term across the course of their adult life. Re-election is possible, of course, and some incumbents do able to establish a lasting political career and relatively stable job security. However, the uncertainty of election and reelection, combined with the small number of elected roles, makes ‘legislator’ a non-standard career path from the point of view of any young person evaluating options for a lifelong career development strategy. Put simply, an aspiring legislator will probably need to have another career path both before and after their time in office.

With these realities acknowledged, there are nevertheless several reasons why it is worth understanding how

elected roles function as paid jobs. Many young people do indeed want to run for public office, and some of those will indeed succeed. It is helpful, from a civic education standpoint, for citizens to understand how elected roles work. Finally, knowing what municipal elected positions are and how they work can help job seekers to understand the many related career paths which, while less visible, are nevertheless comparably important and fulfilling – while sometimes also being more stable.

Job Titles

The following job titles within municipal leadership fall under the occupational category of legislators:

Municipal Councillor

A municipal councillor, historically sometimes called an alderman or alderwoman, is an elected official representing a part of the population within a municipality. The provincial Municipalities Act lays out the kinds of decisions that are made at municipal council meetings, such as municipal taxation and spending, service delivery, projects, program planning, and related policies.

Being a municipal councillor is typically a paid position for those elected, on either a full-time or part-time basis depending on the circumstances. The payment details will vary depending on the size and type of municipality, but typically compensation involves both a base salary and a budget to cover costs like transportation, communication expenses, and professional development.

Some municipal councillors have paid staff who support their work, either on a part-time or full-time basis depending on the size and budget of the municipality. In Ontario, municipalities are not required to give their councillors staff, but many do so where budgets allow. Support staff members can help coordinate schedules, manage communications, or plan events. These kinds of support staff roles are explored elsewhere in this book.

Head of Council (e.g. Mayor)

The role of mayor is the most culturally prominent title for the ‘head of council’ in a municipality, but there are others. Depending on the particular municipality and its size and traditions, the head of council may be called the ‘mayor’, the ‘reeve’, the ‘warden’, the ‘regional chair’, the ‘regional municipality chair’, or simply the ‘head of council’.

The nature of the head of council role varies depending on the size and complexity of the municipality. Head of council is typically a paid employment position for the person elected, and they receive a salary and benefits during their term.

The head of council is the leader of the municipality, typically having both formal and ceremonial duties. One of the main formal duties is to ‘preside over’ council meetings, which means managing how participants take turns speaking, determining voting procedure, managing time, and deciding how procedural rules and norms will be enforced to help the meetings run well. Outside of council meetings, the mayor also works day

to day with city staff and city leaders, and may represent the municipality at events, at meetings, or on decision-making bodies.

The head of council may have full-time or part-time staff working in their office and supporting their work, depending on the size of the municipality. Some of these workers may be political staffers whose roles are linked to the electoral success of the individual leader. Other workers may have ongoing and secure employment supporting the leadership office as an institution, regardless of who has been elected at any given time. These various employment positions are explored later in this book.

School Board Trustee

Trustees elected to make voting decisions on a school board are elected into their role, which is typically structured as a part-time role that comes with an honorarium rather than being set up as a salary. The amount of money paid as an honorarium to each trustee varies from board to board across Ontario, with a provincial regulation (357/06) outlining how factors such as school enrolment should impact the amount. Trustees typically also have allowances to cover the costs of things like travel or training on school board business.

Along with their fellow school board member, each elected trustee votes on the business that comes before the school board. This means deciding on new policies around student success, budgeting, safety, equity and inclusion, and more. The board also has ultimate oversight over school board staffing decisions. Typically each high school principal reports to a superintendent, who reports to a Director of Education, who reports to the school board.

Although not technically a ‘municipal’ entity, elected officials who make up the school board play a key role in local civic life. School boards in Ontario are overseen more directly by the province in their local governance of education, a provincial-level responsibility. Yet provincial norms and rules intertwine school boards and municipal politics in several ways, including the following:

- School board officials are elected at the same time as, and typically on the same ballot as, municipal elected officials.
- Municipalities collect the taxes to fund school boards on behalf of the Province of Ontario, based on the education property tax rate set by the province.

Even beyond this, there are many reasons why school boards and municipal leaders choose to collaborate on issues and projects. Oftentimes it just makes sense to forge partnerships on issues like public health or land use planning, or to develop innovative ways to make links to key services like libraries, sports, and recreation.

School board trustees do not typically have paid staff to assist them in their role. However, they do often receive support from people at a school board office whose job it is to help school board meetings run effectively, and to implement its decisions at local schools. These kinds of leadership, management, and administrative roles are covered in later chapters of this book.

Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and Member of Parliament (MP)

While not a municipal elected official, provincial and federal legislators are nevertheless worth including in a resource on municipal leaders. Their electoral districts or ‘ridings’ are local in nature, meaning that their campaigning and accountability end up being connected to people’s lives in their neighbourhoods and communities.

Local, municipal, and regional and issues are also interconnected with politics and policymaking at the provincial and federal level. Many municipal projects depend on funding and resources provided by these other levels of government, and many local issues are shaped by provincial or federal policies, regulations, and laws.

Elected officials also typically maintain local constituency offices where paid staff and volunteers respond to the needs of members of the community. This includes helping to redirect or guide local constituents who are unfamiliar with matters of jurisdiction, and so come calling to seek help with something that is properly handled at the municipal level. While staff at these constituency offices are again not municipal workers per se, they are often a first point of contact in helping local people find solutions to their problems or achieve their goals. These constituency office staff are covered later in this book.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- How are municipal councillors in your local municipality compensated – is their role considered full-time or part time?
- Do your local municipal councillors have paid support staff? How many?
- What is the location of the constituency office for your local federal MP or provincial MPP?
- What are some of the ways your local school board and your municipality collaborate?

Resources on Becoming a Legislator

Here are some resources that may help if you would like to understand how to run for local public office in Ontario.

- Municipal Elections – The Association of Municipalities of Ontario maintains an information page that helps potential candidates to understand the processes: <https://www.amo.on.ca/about-us/municipal-101/municipal-elections>
- The Municipal Councillor’s Guide – a provincial resource aimed at helping councillors meet their responsibilities to the people in the community: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-municipal-councillors-guide>

- School Board Trustee Elections – The Government of Ontario has an online resource page aimed at candidates: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/school-board-trustee-elections>
- Become a Trustee – The Ontario Education Services Corporation developed a resource site in partnership with several provincial school board trustee organizations: <https://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org/BecomeATrustee/>

Additional Resources

- Information for Candidates (Provincial) – A guide to running for office as a Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP): <https://www.elections.on.ca/en/political-entities-in-ontario/candidates.html>
- Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association (OCSTA): <https://www.ocsta.on.ca/>
- Ontario Public School Boards’ Association (OPSBA): <https://www.ontario.ca/page/school-board-trustee-elections>
- Association des conseils des écoles publiques de l’Ontario (ACÉPO): <https://acepo.org/>
- Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC): <https://afocsc.org/>
- Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM): <https://www.ontariobigcitymayors.ca>

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Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). *Municipalities 101*. <https://www.amo.on.ca/about-us/municipal-101>

Canada, Economic and Social Development (2024). *00010 – Legislators*. National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2021 Version 1.0 <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=1322554&CVD=1322870&CPV=00010&CST=01052021&CLV=5&MLV=5>

Elections Ontario (2025). *Candidates and Political Entities: Information for Candidates* <https://www.elections.on.ca/en/political-entities-in-ontario/candidates.html>

Ontario (2025). Ontario Regulation 357/06: Honoraria for Board members. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060357>

Ontario Education Services Corporation. *School Board Trustees – Who are they? Why are they important?* <https://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org/WhatDoTrusteesDo/SchoolBoardTrustees.aspx>

Ontario, School Funding (2025). *School Funding*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/school-funding>

3.

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL ROLES

This chapter explores careers and positions on the political, electoral, legislative side of municipal affairs, including very senior leadership.

A few of the roles in this chapter are described as ‘political’ roles because the goal of the role is to support a particular elected official once they have secured office, but only for so long as that same person holds the office. Sometimes called political ‘staffers’, the people in these roles should be seen as a part of the ‘team’ of the elected official whose values, goals, and priorities they have been hired or appointed to advance. Roles like this commonly go to former members of a candidate’s campaign team after a successful election, but they may also go to experienced outside applicants as well.

But most of the roles in this section are described as ‘non-political’ because they further the interests of the municipality as a whole, rather than the goals of any particular leaders. These non-political roles involve a commitment to neutrality, or a priority for proper process over achieving certain products, priorities, or outcomes. In this sense these non-political roles have a vibe similar to that of the formalized ‘public servants’ at the provincial or federal level. Despite not being on a partisan ‘side’, they are still very involved in government, governance, and the management of social issues – what much of the public at large would see as ‘politics’.

Senior Government Managers and Officials (NOC 00011)

A number of senior roles in any municipality fit under the occupational category for senior government managers and officials. As with many senior or managerial roles, the educational and training requisites for these kinds of roles are not typically outlined in any detail because relevant experience and skills are for more pertinent. If you have aspirations to someday take on one of these leadership roles, you will likely need to identify an alternate entry-level or mid-career starting point. The other city staff and political staffer roles outlined in this chapter may be suitable options. Nevertheless, as with the political roles covered in the previous chapter, starting by understanding what those these leadership positions involve can help to explain, later in the chapter, what their support staff do for a living.

Job Titles

The following job titles fall under this occupational category:

Municipal Clerk

The Clerk is a key leadership role found in any municipality in Ontario. The *Elections Act* requires that each municipality create the position of Clerk, meaning it is what's called a 'statutory' role (meaning required by statute or law). This is typically a paid and full-time employment role held by experienced leaders. The Clerk is appointed by a decision of council, often after the municipality has advertised the need for somebody to fulfil the role.

The municipal Clerk is not to be confused with other types of roles titled 'clerk' that perform various administrative or clerical duties at different levels within organizations. Instead, the Clerk of a municipality has important duties affecting the whole organization and its operations. The Clerk is considered a non-political role because the key focus of the job is complying with provincial rules and laws rather than pursuing political interests or helping any particular elected leader. The duties of the Clerk include:

- Managing council meetings, agendas, minutes, and records;
- Overseeing the planning and running of municipal elections, as set out in the *Municipal Elections Act*;
- Supervising the drafting, passing, and administration of municipal by-laws;
- Coordinating the issuing and administration of permits and licenses;
- Responding to requests for information under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*;
- Other relevant duties related to the legislative and corporate operations of the municipality.

An Office of the Clerk has been created in many municipalities in order to recruit staff members who help to deliver the services and administration related to these responsibilities. If you are interested in careers in municipalities, you may want to look for job postings that list the employer or reporting unit as the Clerk's Office.

Treasurer (e.g. Chief Financial Officer)

This senior financial role, also a required 'statutory' role under the *Municipal Act*, is typically a paid, full-time employment role appointed by the municipal council. It is probably better categorized under the national occupational category for financial managers (10010). Yet it is included here alongside the Clerk to help highlight the importance of the role, both in actual municipal operations and under the *Act*. The treasurer, sometimes called the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), is ultimately responsible for supporting the council and senior leadership with budgeting, accounting, and other financial matters. Depending on the size of the

municipality, the treasurer may lead or be a part of a department whose help staff coordinate this work, such as an Office of the Treasurer.

Chief Administrative Officer (e.g. City Manager)

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is a senior leadership role common to many Ontario municipalities, which is often but not always used interchangeably with the title ‘city manager’. The nature of the role varies, in part because the role of Chief Administrative Officer is not required under the *Municipal Act*. However, the CAO typically serves as a liaison between the municipal council and municipal staff. Thus the CAO frequently acts as a leadership authority for various staff departments and department managers, and serves as the voice of city staff in its media relations.

Chief of Staff (e.g. to the Mayor)

A chief of staff role may exist in larger municipalities to support the head of council – which is, remember, the Ontario-wide term for leadership roles like ‘mayor’ or ‘reeve’). This is typically considered a ‘political’ appointment, because it is held by somebody who has been appointed by the current head of council, to help achieve that leader’s goals, and is expected to be replaced by the next leader to be elected. This chief of staff may lead a team that combines temporary political staffers with ongoing city staff who stay on from leader to leader. When the mayor of a city, for example, does have chief of staff, they are typically put in charge of the team or department known as the Mayor’s Office. Some of the staff roles described below are most commonly found in larger municipalities, especially the ones that do use the term ‘mayor’ and do have an Office of the Mayor.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- Which of these roles were previously familiar to you, and which are you learning about through this book?
- Why do you think the provincial government thinks it is important for every municipality to appoint a Clerk?
- What kinds of other previous jobs do you think would prepare somebody well to take on the role of Chief Administrative Officer or City Manager?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand the roles in this category.

- Key Municipal Roles: <https://www.amo.on.ca/about-us/municipal-101/key-municipal-roles>
- Accredited Ontario Municipal Clerk (AOMC): <https://www.amcto.com/professional-growth/professional-accreditation-programs/accredited-ontario-municipal-clerk-aomc>

Executive Assistants and Political Staffers (NOC 12100)

The municipal-level workers in this category might include both political staffers and non-political municipal staff. According to Canada’s categorization of occupations: “Executive assistants coordinate administrative procedures, public relations activities and research and analysis functions for members of legislative assemblies, ministers, deputy ministers, corporate officials and executives, committees and boards of directors. They are employed by governments, corporations and associations (ESDC 2021).”

Job Titles

The following job titles fall under this occupational category:

Political Staffer

This is a generic term used to describe paid staff members on an elected official’s team, especially those whose work primarily supports their success and popularity as a political candidate. ‘Political staffer’ not typically an actual job title, the term is used by politicians’ team members to describe themselves, and by others to describe them, especially when emphasizing a distinction between political staffers and non-political municipal employees or civil servants.

Executive Assistant

Executive assistant is a job title held by many kinds of administrative workers, including those whose main role is supporting a particular leader, legislative body, or board. They might be political staffers or they might be non-political municipal staff, depending on the context. An executive assistant may be hired, for example, to help the Clerk organize the operations of the municipal council itself. In other cases, a single executive assistant might support both the Mayor and CAO if their duties and workflows are intertwined.

Constituency Assistant

A constituency assistant is a kind of political staffer hired to help elected officials to respond to the needs of their constituents — that is, the people they represent during their time in office. The constituency assistant will typically help respond to calls and emails, solve problems, host events, and build relationships. This type of role is more common at the provincial and federal level, but municipal councillors may have a budget to hire team members, even if just on a part-time or casual basis.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- Have you ever reached out to your local municipal councillor for help with an issue?
- Do you know anybody who works for, or has worked for, an elected official either as a staffer or as a member of the campaign team?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand this category.

- The Role of Council, Councillor, and Staff – a chapter from Ontario’s online guide for municipal councillors: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-municipal-councillors-guide/1-role-council-councillor-and-staff>

Professional occupations in advertising, marketing and public relations (11202)

As outlined in Canada’s national occupational categorization, workers in this category “analyse, develop and implement communication and promotion strategies and information programs; analyse advertising needs and develop appropriate advertising and marketing plans; publicize activities and events, and maintain media relations on behalf of businesses, governments and other organizations, and for performers, athletes, writers and other talented individuals (ESDC 2021).”

Job Titles

The following job titles fall under this occupational category:

Press Secretary

A press secretary is typically a political staffer who serves as the spokesperson and communications specialist on behalf of an elected official or political entity. This is typically more of a ‘political’ role aimed at shaping public opinion in the interests of the ‘principal’ they serve. In the municipal sphere, the mayor or head of council of a large municipality is probably the most likely to employ a press secretary.

Information Officer

An information officer focuses on helping members of the public get the information they need. This is typically a more of a non-partisan staff role than a political staffer role. For example, an information officer may help the Clerk's office respond to the information and transparency requirements of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*.

Communications Staff

Like any large organization, municipalities employ communications staff members throughout the organization to help share information, deliver services, implement policy, manage elections, and achieve other communications goals. These are typically non-political staff who work for the organization as a whole. Of course, as a local government body with multiple partners, constituents, and stakeholders, the communications needs of a municipality are probably even more complex and diverse than those of most organizations.

Discussion Questions (Heading 3: Qs for each NOC Listing)

Consider or explore the following:

- How does the daily work of a mayor's press secretary differ from the work of other communications staff who work in a municipality?
- How is responding to a constituent's freedom of information request different from other kinds of communications jobs?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand this category.

- Canadian Association of Municipal Communicators – a non-profit professional association connecting local government workers from across Canada: <https://www.thecamc.ca/about>
- Killingsworth, Colleen. (2009) Municipal Government Communications: The Case of Local Government Communications. *The McMaster Journal of Communication* 6(1). <https://journals.mcmaster.ca/mjc/article/view/247/214>

Social and Community Service Workers (NOC 42201)

Community service workers have client-facing, public-facing, or community-facing roles that are often aimed

at serving the best interests of their counterparts just as much as helping their employers. These kinds of roles are often included in the broader set of ‘helping professions’ even if formal professional accreditation is not necessarily required.

Job Titles

The following job titles in municipalities fall under this occupational category:

Public Engagement Staff

The office of the Clerk will often employ municipal staff whose job it is to engage with members of the public in ways that help council proceedings or advance the goals of the municipality. This may include, for example, helping community members get ready to ‘delegate to council’, meaning participating and contributing formally to a council meeting by following the proper norms and procedures.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- Have you or someone you know ever contributed to a municipal council meeting, perhaps by formally ‘delegating to council’?
- Have you ever been to a council meeting or visited the location where council meetings are held (for example, a city hall)?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand this category.

- How to Become a Community Engagement Officer: <https://www.linkedin.com/advice/1/how-do-you-become-community-engagement-officer-svcoc>

Social Policy Researchers, Consultants and Program Officers (NOC 41403)

As outlined in Canada's national occupational categorization: “Social policy researchers, consultants and program officers conduct

research, develop policy and implement or administer programs in areas such as consumer affairs, employment, home economics, immigration, law enforcement, corrections, human rights, housing, labour, family services, foreign aid and international development. They are employed by government departments and agencies, hospitals, educational institutions, consulting establishments, professional associations, research institutes, non-government organizations and international organizations or they may be self-employed (ESDC 2021)."

Job Titles

The following job title falls under this occupational category:

Policy Advisor

A policy advisor is a municipal staff member who helps to evaluate policy options and to make evidence-based recommendations to decision-makers. A policy advisor may be a political staffer reporting to a head of council like a Mayor, or they may instead be a non-political staffer reporting to a CAO or department leader. Policy advisors often have relevant subject matter expertise, education, or experience. However depending on the role and their background, their knowhow and skills may be either on the issue content or on the procedural policymaking side, or both. Policy advisors are often quick learners whose adaptability across contexts is a career asset.

Policy Consultant

Policy consultants are much like policy advisors, as described above, and in fact these job titles may be used interchangeably. The difference in titling may sometimes reflect either a shorter-term freelance contract setup for the role, or might be intended to emphasize that the person in the role brings a fresh outside perspective from another sector, such as private business or a field of expertise.

Policy Researcher

Policy researchers are also similar to both policy advisors and policy consultants and, again, the work they do may overlap with peers with those titles. However where the difference in titling is intentional, the role may involve a heavier emphasis on research than on advice giving, perhaps by contributing to a division of labour where the work of a research team informs the work of a policy advisor but does not give advice.

Policy researchers may focus their time on data collection, tracking, statistical analysis, environmental scans, and ongoing professional development to stay on top of a complex or ever-changing set of issue areas.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- What kinds of policy advisors or consultants do you suspect are currently the most common in Ontario municipalities, based on your knowledge of contemporary issues and trends?
- How might the courses you have taken and the research you have done equip you to get started with local policy research?
- Do you have any instructors, teachers, or mentors whose work has a local policy dimension or applicability?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand this category.

- Muniscope – a municipal research platform run by the Secretariat of the Table of Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Local Government (SMLG): <https://www.muniscope.ca/research>
- Bureau of Municipal Research: <http://bomr.ca/>

Sources

Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). *Municipalities 101*. <https://www.amo.on.ca/about-us/municipal-101>

Canada, Economic and Social Development (2024). *000X – Title Here*. National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2021. URL

4.

MUNICIPAL STAFF IN DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Introduction

This chapter covers municipal staff who are straightforwardly rank-and-file employees of the municipality. In other words the types and categories of workers covered here are typically part of agencies or departments whose reporting structure flows up through departmental or agency leadership and then through the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) directly to the municipal council.

These staff, what this book will call ‘administratively-managed’ staff as a shortcut, work in a different set of conditions than political staffers do, since the latter report directly to a specific elected official and are not traditional ongoing staff. The administratively-managed staff in this chapter also work in a slightly (or sometimes very) different employment dynamic than other local workers employed by organizations with their own governing boards (such as Board of Health or Children’s Aid Societies) that report directly to the municipal council. Those ‘board-governed’ staff members are discussed in a subsequent chapter.

This way of dividing roles across chapters is also intended to help highlight for the reader a little bit about the organizational structure of municipal jobs. There is often a difference between, on the one hand, working more directly for the municipality in a job at one of its departments or agencies and, on the other hand, working for an organization whose reporting lines to council are a little more complex. The difference is sometimes subtle but can also have practical consequences for workers and teams in a municipality, for example affecting inclusion or exclusion in things like benefits schemes, social networks, or professional organizations.

This chapter’s other main focus is to highlight the kinds of careers and occupations that are found relatively uniquely in municipalities, and not at other organizations. However, this is not meant to take anything away from the importance of the many team members whose invaluable work in ‘corporate services’ supports the functioning of the municipality as an organization just as crucially as their counterparts in private-sector corporations or non-profit organizations. A selection of those crucial but less context-dependent types of roles is included at the end of the chapter.

Urban and Land Use Planners (NOC 21202)

As described in the Canadian occupational classification: “Urban and land use planners develop plans and recommend policies for managing land use, physical facilities and associated services for urban and rural areas and remote regions. They are employed by all levels of government, land developers, engineering and other consulting companies, or may work as private consultants (ESDC 2021).” These kinds of roles are typically regulated through professional certification in licensing, and in Ontario the regulatory body is the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI).

Job Titles

The following job titles fall under this occupational category:

City Planner

A municipal planner works on the policies and plans that affect land use, growth, and development in a municipality, especially in larger or growing cities. While individual businesses, developers, and citizens may conceive of plans that suit their needs and interests, city planners are accountable for the big picture and the collective long-term interests of the municipality and its inhabitants.

Zoning Officer

Zoning officers help municipalities in Ontario to enforce their zoning bylaws, which help to manage land use and land development. Whereas a planner’s role focuses primarily on the big picture of planning and zoning, a zoning officer’s day-to-day duties will focus more on individual situations and case management. Zoning officers help to manage conflict and to help ensure that bylaws and plans are being followed.

Transportation Planner

A transportation planner works alongside other municipal planners by focusing on the complex dimensions of transportation. This might include, for example, planning the sustainable and efficient design of bus routes, rail lines, or other types of transit solutions. Transportation planners may also be responsible for designing walkable, bikeable, and accessible solutions, alongside vehicle-friendly highways and roads.

Discussion Questions (Heading 3: Qs for each NOC Listing)

Consider or explore the following:

- Can you think of a development or plan in your municipality or region that likely involved high-level planning?
- Do you recall a situation in your community where zoning issues created conflict or controversy? What was the outcome?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand this category.

- Ontario – Citizens Guide to Land Use Planning (Updated June 2025)
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI)

Program Leaders in Recreation, Sport, and Fitness (NOC 54100)

Category Explanation

Job Titles

The following job titles fall under this occupational category:

Activities Leader – Seniors

Activities leaders focused on seniors often work at senior’s centers or other municipally-run recreation facilities. Municipalities often invest resources in helping seniors to stay healthy, fit, and active, boosting not just physical but also social and cognitive well-being.

Athletics Instructor

Athletic instructors may be responsible for sport and fitness programming at local gyms, clubs, or recreation centers managed by a municipality.

Certified Personal Trainer

A certified personal trainer works with clients to achieve their exercise and fitness goals in a safe, healthy, and

evidence-based way. In a municipal context trainers may be employed by recreation centers or other local exercise and leisure facilities.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- What kinds of recreation, sport, or fitness programs have you enjoyed that were delivered by your municipality?
- Have you ever volunteered or worked part-time in a local recreation, sport, or fitness facility? If so, who were the full-time or part-time ongoing staff members who worked there?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand this category.

- Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology – Certified Personal Trainers (CSEP-CPT)
- Canadian Fitness Professionals (Canfitpro)
- Canadian Fitness Education Services (CFES)
- Certified Professional Trainers Network (CPTN)

Business Development Officers and Market Researchers and Analysts (41402)

Category Explanation

Job Titles (Heading 3 – Within Each NOC Listing)

The following job titles fall under this occupational category:

Example 1 (Heading 4 – Each Exemplary Job Title)

Explanation text. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Example 2 (Heading 4 – Each Exemplary Job Title)

Explanation text. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt

ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Discussion Questions (Heading 3: Qs for each NOC Listing)

Consider or explore the following:

- Q1
- Q2

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand the roles in this category.

- Resource 1

41403 Social policy researchers, consultants and program officers.

Category Explanation

Job Titles (Heading 3 – Within Each NOC Listing)

The following job titles fall under this occupational category:

Example 1 (Heading 4 – Each Exemplary Job Title)

Explanation text. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Example 2 (Heading 4 – Each Exemplary Job Title)

Explanation text. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt

ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Discussion Questions (Heading 3: Qs for each NOC Listing)

Consider or explore the following:

- Q1
- Q2

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand the roles in this category.

- Resource 1

41407 – Program officers unique to government
Category Explanation

Job Titles (Heading 3 – Within Each NOC Listing)

The following job titles fall under this occupational category:

Example 1 (Heading 4 – Each Exemplary Job Title)

Explanation text. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Example 2 (Heading 4 – Each Exemplary Job Title)

Explanation text. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Discussion Questions (Heading 3: Qs for each NOC Listing)

Consider or explore the following:

- Q1
- Q2

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand the roles in this category.

- Resource 1

Additional Roles (e.g. Corporate Services)

This section of the chapter covers a number of important jobs and roles that exist in municipalities, but which are not quite specific to municipalities – or even to public sector organizations. Instead, these are roles that any medium-to-large organization might need to conduct its operations. In municipalities this category of roles and departments is often called ‘corporate services’. Indeed, many of these kinds of roles are often also found in corporations or other large organizations that employ staff.

Additional Relevant Categories

Roles key to a municipality’s function, and the occupational categories into which they fit, include:

Accountants and Financial Auditors (NOC 11100)

The Finance Department or Financial Services team within a municipality typically reports to the Treasurer or Chief Financial Officer and includes many team members with financial training and savvy such as accountants and auditors.

Administrative Assistants (NOC 13110)

Administrative assistants are an important part of any organization because they help to do the day-to-day work of planning meetings organizing documents keeping calendars and assisting with communications and

correspondence. They can be found at any level of a municipal structure and across various kinds of agencies, departments, or board-governed organizations.

Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations Professionals (NOC 11202)

Like any complex organization that cares about communicating with the public, municipalities often employ a wide range of communications professionals. Example roles might include advertising and promotions coordinators, media relations officers, social media coordinators, marketing consultants, event marketing coordinators, advertising campaign organizers, and more.

Computer Network and Web Technicians (NOC 22220)

Everybody from staff members to council members to the head of council all need working computers, network access, and digital tools to do their job. Computer network and web technicians, along with other information technology specialists, are just as important to the day-to-day operations of municipalities as they are to every other organization across the private public and not-for-profit sectors.

Human Resources Professionals (NOC 11200)

In any larger organization with paid employees, human resources (HR) professionals help workers and people managers to ensure that everybody is paid correctly and has the training and support they need to do their jobs properly while maintaining their health and well-being. HR professionals also administer benefits and vacations, and help with problem-solving around absences, health issues, or workplace conflict. They also support the hiring and departure phase of the job cycle, including helping with everything from talent searches to interview management to new employee onboarding.

Lawyers (41101)

All organizations have their own legal needs, and municipalities are no exception. While smaller municipalities or regions may retain outside legal counsel, medium to large municipalities will often hire lawyers and other legal professionals to work in an office of legal services or legal department that often becomes central to the municipality's corporate services and ongoing institutional management.

Building Maintenance Workers (NOC 73201)

Municipalities offices

Discussion Questions (Heading 3: Qs for each NOC Listing)

Consider or explore the following:

- What are some of the many other jobs that you expect exist at
- While many kinds of organizations employ lawyers, how might the day-to-day work of a lawyer employed by a municipality differ from other lawyers' work?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand the roles in this category.

- Municipal Workforce Development: a project of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

Sources

Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). *Municipalities 101*. <https://www.amo.on.ca/about-us/municipal-101>

Canada, Economic and Social Development (2024). *000X – Title Here*. National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2021. URL

5.

BOARD MEMBERS AND BOARD-GOVERNED ROLES

The Role of Boards in Local Governance and Employment

This chapter explores careers and positions governed by municipal ‘boards’, which play a key leadership role in municipal governance. ‘Boards’ are formal groups with specially appointed members, and are hold regular and structured meetings to discuss specific topics, with the goal of making recommendations to municipal council on that subject matter.

Municipal boards function much like the board of directors of a private sector company, but their authority ultimately feeds into decisions of council rather than to owners. Elected councillors make the ultimate decisions after receiving a recommendation from the board, but the work of each board helps by putting in the focused time and effort to consider the options, conduct research, review data, and gather input from the community.

The members of municipal boards are typically appointed by council, or in some cases, by the province. Boards and other similar groups like ‘commissions’ and ‘committees’ are outlined under the *Municipal Act* in Ontario.

Boards oversee the day-to-day operations of organizations, services, or corporations that employ many people in a municipality. The chain of command or leadership and management structure of those organizations often ultimately report to an organizational leader who in turn reports to the board. Very often the employees of those organizations are what might be called ‘board-governed’ municipal employees, in the sense that in their job they report up to an organizational leader who in turn reports to a board, rather than reporting to the municipality’s Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). This sets them apart from other city staff who we might ‘

The chapter is also aimed at surveying just a few of the most prominent examples of these ‘board-governed’ municipal workers whose reporting structure is governed by boards, such as librarians, police officers, and children’s aid society workers. This chapter is also aimed at explaining the role of board members, even though being a board member is not quite a career *per se*.

Board Members and Program Officers Unique to Government (NOC 41407)

Municipal or local board membership is not typically an employment role, and is instead usually a volunteer position. However, for present chapter-organizing purposes the closest and most relevant occupational category that would suit this role insofar as it is a ‘job’ is Program Officers Unique to Government (NOC 41407). This same category covers Intergovernmental Affairs officers, a somewhat related employment role that is indeed a proper career role.

Job Titles

The following roles and job titles (arguably) fall under this occupational category:

Police Services Board Member

Being a member on a local Police Services Board is a part-time role, and board members are often (but not always) paid a modest honorarium or other remuneration. While being on the Police Services Board is not a job *per se*, it is nevertheless an important community leadership role. Every municipality that creates its own police force is required to establish a Police Services Board made up of civilian members who provide oversight to the police. The same is true for municipalities who enter contracts with the provincial police. The required size and makeup of a municipality’s Police Services Board is outlined in the *Community Safety and Policing Act*, 2019, building on the earlier *Police Services Act*. Members are typically appointed by (and from) the municipal council, though other bodies such as the provincial government may also appoint members. Police officers and police force staff are typically considered municipal staff even though their reporting structure ultimately reports to the Police Services Board through the Chief of Police, who reports to that board rather than to the Chief Administrative Officer of the municipality.

Library Board Member

Being a member on a municipal Library Board is typically a part-time, volunteer position. Despite this minimalist structure, this is another significant community leadership role. The Public Libraries Act requires that the day-to-day operations of the library be governed by a public board of this type, which is set up as a corporation. The municipal council has certain powers and duties such as appointing Library Board members, approving its budget, and more. Local libraries thus have a complex relationship with municipalities. Many but not all library staff are treated as municipal staff when it comes to their human resources support, bargaining units, and benefits, even though their reporting chain of command flows up to the Library Board through library leadership, and not through the Chief Administrative Officer of the municipality.

Board of Directors Member for a Children's Aid Society

Child protection and family services in Ontario municipalities are typically overseen by a children's aid society or family services society, as outlined under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* (2017). These societies have a board of directors that reports to the local municipal council, as do other boards. Yet because of funding and regulations, they have other accountabilities as well. Each board is answerable to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and are subject to oversight by the Ontario Child Advocate and also by the Child and Family Services Review Board.

Member of a Board of Health

The public health and health promotion efforts of a municipality is typically run by a local public health unit, which in return is managed by a Board of Health (BOH). Public health units do population-level work in health monitoring, health promotion, and offer preventive and responsive health support for individuals and families. Their work is different from, even if crucially related to, the work of local doctor's offices and hospitals. Boards of Health are therefore also very different in their focus than Hospital Boards, which are typically autonomous nonprofit entities reporting to, and appointed by, the provincial government without also reporting to, or being appointed by, local municipal council. In contrast, most of the members of a local Board of Health are appointed by the municipal council, though a minority may be appointed by the provincial government. Being a member on a Board of Health is typically a part-time and volunteer role, though community members may receive remuneration in the form of a *per diem* (i.e. day by day amount) for attending meetings.

Other Board Members of Note

There are many and various boards managed by municipal councils around Ontario, and for reasons of space, not all of them can be covered here. Examples include:

- Arts Councils
- Conservation Authorities
- Transit Commissions
- Utilities Commissions
- Waste Management Boards

In each of these cases, the board or commission members are likely to be part-time volunteers who, in some cases, may receive modest remuneration or honoraria to offset the costs of participating. As outlined above, these roles are not quite 'jobs', though learning about them may help to learn about other senior leadership and

management jobs that are indeed full-time employment roles, as well as numerous board-governed jobs which may also be considered municipal staff jobs.

School Boards

School boards are another example of a local board, but they are not appointed by, nor do they report to, municipal council. They are instead directly elected by residents during municipal elections, and report to the provincial Ministry of Education. This makes local teachers and school board staff a unique case. For this reason, they are discussed in this book the chapter on elected officials.

Member of the Ontario Land Tribunal (Provincial)

There are a few examples of public-sector and statutory boards dealing with ‘local’ issues and stakeholders which are nevertheless not considered to be ‘municipal’ because they are set up to report differently. One prominent example is members on the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT), formerly called the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT). The Ontario Land Tribunal governs conflicts over local land use issues such as zoning or new developments, and its members are appointed by, and report to, leaders at the provincial level. Although this body is not itself municipal, its decisions have major impacts on important and sometimes contentious issues involving municipal and local actors.

Intergovernmental Affairs Officers

Unlike the other roles listed in this section, intergovernmental affairs officer is not a board member role, but a staff role. It is also more likely to be a full-time, ongoing career role. As is apparent from the details under other role explanations in this section, intergovernmental relations is a major priority for municipalities, the boards they oversee, and the departments and organizations that help deliver municipal services. Intergovernmental affairs officers help to do the work of managing relationships with other levels of government, reporting to them, and coordinating on issues with them. Intergovernmental affairs officers may report to the head of council (such as the Mayor’s office), or they may be employed by top leadership in the Chief Administrative Officer’s office, or even within a department or service with heavy intergovernmental responsibilities.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- What does it mean to say that a certain municipal board is ‘statutory’?
- How does a Board of Health differ from a Hospital Board?
- Do you know of any examples of local-level staff roles, employed in a reporting structure that ultimately

reports to a municipal board, but which are not considered to be city staff?

- In your view, what are some of the most surprising ways municipal politics and service delivery is interconnected with provincial policymaking and governance?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand this category.

- Child and Family Services Review Board: the provincial-level board which, in turn, oversees local boards in child and family services
- Ontario Land Tribunal: a website offering a citizen's guide to Land Use Planning and how governance works
- Police Service Boards: an explanatory website maintained by the Government of Ontario.
- Ontario Association of Police Service Boards: a provincial-level organization connecting board members from across municipalities.

Police Officers (NOC 42100)

Local police officers report to a local police force, which in turn is overseen by the Police Services Board. Like other employees of the police force, police officers in a municipality are board-governed in their employment, rather than reporting up to the municipality's Chief Administrative Officer. The Police Services Board reports to council and, typically, includes members of council as well.

Job Titles

The following are just a few of the policing job titles that fall under this occupational category:

Patrol Officer

A patrol officer spends their working time monitoring and maintaining community safety within a specific geographic area and acts as a first responder to calls.

Community Relations Officer

A community relations officer focuses on building relationships with individuals, communities, and organizations by attending meetings and events. A key goal of a community relations officer is to build mutual trust and good working relationships between the police force and community members, often by better understanding systemic and structural or institutional issues.

Desk Officer

A desk officer is a law enforcement official who is responsible for the day to day operations of a police station or division. They often supervise other staff, manage police property, and perform the kind of administrative duties that cannot properly be performed by non-police officers.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- What are some of the many other policing roles not listed here, some of which may belong to other Canadian occupational categories?
- At what events or meetings have you encountered community relations officers?
- How do municipal police forces associated with a region differ from police forces associated with a ‘single-tier’ city?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand the roles in this category.

- Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police: an inter-police force organization.
- Municipal and Rural Police Services: a Statistics Canada listing for Ontario.

Librarians (NOC 51100)

Public libraries in Ontario are overseen by Library Boards, which each report to their respective municipal council. Librarians working in those libraries are therefore an example of board-governed municipal staff members. Librarians in Ontario typically have a Master’s degree in library and information studies, or from a Master’s program accredited by the American Library Association (ESDC 2021).

Job Titles

The following job titles fall under this occupational category:

Reference Librarian

A reference librarian acts as the focus on helping library patrons with finding information, books, or resources. They are often the first point of contact for community members using the library or its services.

Bookmobile Librarian

Bookmobile librarians manage and staff a large vehicle with book shelving installed which can be driven to under-served areas of the municipality and, when parked, serve community members as a small pop-up branch of the library.

Children's Services Librarian

Librarians focused on children's services maintain the books and items in a special children's section of a library branch, run programs for children and youth, and host events or sessions aimed at families, children, and youth.

Digital Librarian

A digital librarian specializes in supporting library users with using library technology, including both advanced tools and general use of a library's public computer area. They might provide this support both in-person and online.

Technical Services Librarian

A technical services librarian manages the behind-the-scenes functions of a library. This includes important roles like ordering new books and library materials, updating digital records, organizing storage and display, and ensuring accessibility.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- What other kinds of local library staff have you met when you use the library?
- Beyond books on shelves, what kinds of library materials or services are offered in your community?

- What community function do libraries play, as physical spaces, aside from places to read?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand the roles in this category.

- Ontario Library Association: a provincial organization for library staff.
- Ontario Association of Library Technicians: a related organization focused on library technicians, a related role classified under a separate Canadian national occupation classification (NOC 52100).

Social and Community Service Workers (42201)

According to Canada’s national occupational classification, “Social and community service workers administer and implement a variety of social assistance programs and community services, and assist clients to deal with personal and social problems. They are employed by social service and government agencies, mental health agencies, group homes, shelters, substance abuse centres, school boards, correctional facilities and other establishments (ESDC 2021).”

As discussed above, under Ontario’s *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* (2017), child and family services agencies are governed by boards of directors that report both to local municipalities and to the province. The people employed by this agency are therefore board-governed local workers who may or may not also be considered municipal staff, depending on the context. Many full-time and ongoing employees work in roles that fit the national occupational category of Social and Community Service Workers (ESDC 2021).

Social and community services may be employed in other municipal-board-governed local organizations as well. For example, Public Health Units, governed by Boards of Health, may similarly employ staff who fit into the category of social and community service workers.

Job Titles

The following job titles fall under this occupational category:

Child Protection Workers (or Family Service Workers)

Child protection workers, often called family service workers, are professionals tasked with helping ensure the safety and security of children and youth in family settings. They navigate challenging and complex situations

where there is concern that a child's safety has been put at risk, or where there are allegations of abuse, neglect, or misconduct.

Mental Health Support Workers

Mental Health Support Workers might be employed by Public Health Units, by Children's Aid Societies, by Family Services Agencies, or by other local board-governed organizations.

Women's Centre Program Coordinator

Women's centres provide a range of services for women, including resources for vulnerable women. This can sometimes include shelter services for women and children who need a safe place to stay due to domestic violence or other vulnerabilities. This job type fits into this occupational category, and is included here for this reason. Yet many local women's centres and shelters in Ontario, while they are supported with funding by municipalities, are actually operated by independent non-profit organizations, rather than being run by the kind of board-governed organizations that are the focus of this chapter.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- What are some examples of important local services delivered by independent organizations which are neither run directly as municipal agencies nor governed by local boards reporting to municipal council?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand the roles in this category.

- Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies – Careers: a career resource run by the OACAS.
- Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses – Violence Against Women Jobs: a career resource provided by OAIITH.
- Find Mental Health Support in Ontario – a resource to find help if you need it.
- Find a Shelter on Shelter Safe – Ontario – a tool that can help find a shelter near you.

Other Board-Governed Employment Roles

Job titles not already covered in depth in this chapter may also fit into the wider grouping of board-governed local workers.

Additional Relevant Categories

Other notable roles and the occupational categories into which they fit include:

Conservation Officers (NOC 22113)

The workers employed by local conservation authorities will often fulfil roles that fit under the national occupational category for conservation and fishery officers (22113). While this category is more commonly used to classify federal and provincial workers, it applies to many more local-level conservation workers too. Conservation workers employed by a conservation authority may or may not also be considered municipal workers, depending on the local context.

Public Health Nurses (NOC 31301)

Public Health Units very often employ public health nurses who are very often registered nurses (RNs) but whose day-to-day work differs from the familiar functions of their nursing colleagues working in hospital settings. Public health nurses may focus on health promotion campaigns, prenatal education and preparation, family home visits for new parents, vaccination clinics, outreach to doctor's offices, and other similar public health initiatives.

Public Health and Safety Professionals (NOC 21120)

Many of the full-time and ongoing employees of Public Health Units work in roles that fit the national occupational category of Public and Environmental Health and Safety Professionals (21120).

Transit Workers (NOC 73301)

In many municipalities, municipal transit authorities and their decision-making boards oversee the day-to-day operation of transit services. The employees who work for those services include bus drivers, subway operators and other transit operators. These workers may or may not be considered municipal staff, depending on how the transit services are organized. Some transit services operate as fairly straightforward municipal agencies, with the governing board heavily influenced by the municipal council (or even being made up primarily of

council members). Smaller municipalities without transit authorities may employ staff more directly, or and others may deploy other transit solutions.

Discussion Questions

Consider or explore the following:

- What are some other local-level employment roles not covered here, which would also fit within this chapter's grouping of local workers employed by municipal board-governed entities?

Resources

Here are some resources that may help understand the roles in this category.

- Amalgamated Transit Union Canada: <https://atucanada.ca/>
- Canadian Public Health Association: <https://www.cpha.ca/>
- Community Health Nurses of Canada: <https://www.chnc.ca/en/>
- Ontario Association of Public Health Nursing Leaders: <https://ophnl.org/>
- Ontario Conservation Officers Association: <https://ocoa.ca/>

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