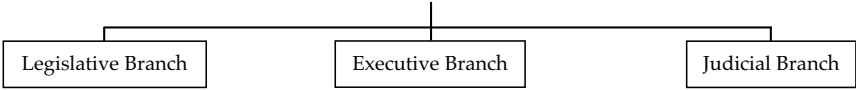


# ILLINOIS GOVERNMENT

## ILLINOIS CONSTITUTION



The Illinois Constitution, the governing document of the state, was first adopted in 1818 after Illinois was admitted to the Union as the 21st state. The current version of the Illinois Constitution, adopted in 1970, extended anti-discrimination and health environment rights, granted home-rule rights to larger cities and counties to tax and rule without state authorization, and gave line-item veto power to the governor to eliminate specific provisions in legislation.

**Branches:** Like the federal government, Illinois government consists of executive, legislative and judicial branches to check and balance each other's powers. The governor heads the **executive branch** and shares authority with five other elected constitutional officers: lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, comptroller and treasurer. As chief executive, the governor controls the state budget, appoints department administrators and reports to the General Assembly annually on the condition of the state.

The General Assembly heads the **legislative branch**, made up of the 59-member Senate and the 118-member House of Representatives. The General Assembly introduces and passes legislation involving policy and administration of state and local affairs, taxes and spending.

The Supreme Court heads the **judicial branch**, which comprises five Appellate Court districts and 24 judicial circuits. The seven-member Supreme Court interprets the Illinois Constitution and laws and hears final arguments in certain legal cases.

**Local Governments:** The powers and responsibilities of local governments, including their ability to raise revenue and enter into debt, are dependent on state statutes. \*Illinois has 6,968 units of local government, more than any other state. General purpose units, the main form of local government, have multiple functions and provide basic services such as police, fire, roads, sewer, water and public health services. These local government units include county (102); municipal, including cities, villages and towns (1,298); and township (1,431 in 85 counties).

Unlike general purpose units, special purpose districts (4,137) are dedicated to a single purpose and their boundaries cross the boundaries of other local governments. School districts (905) may be the most familiar, but special districts provide many other types of services such as parks and recreation, library facilities, soil and water conservation, hospitals and mass transit.

**Political Party System:** The two major political parties — Republican and Democrat — are responsible for the conduct of public affairs in the state as well as the nation. Political parties were not established by the U.S. or Illinois Constitutions, but by 1870 the basic party names and structures were established and have continued to this day.

\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 Census of Governments